



# Iowa General Assembly

## 2011 Committee Briefings

Legislative Services Agency – Legal Services Division

Iowa Education Summit Webpage:

[http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2342:iowa-education-summit&catid=666:highlights](http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2342:iowa-education-summit&catid=666:highlights)

### IOWA EDUCATION SUMMIT

**Meeting Dates:** [July 25-26, 2011](#)

**Purpose.** *This compilation of briefings on legislative interim committee meetings and other meetings and topics of interest to the Iowa General Assembly, written by the Legal Services Division staff of the nonpartisan Legislative Services Agency, describes committee activities or topics. The briefings were originally distributed in the Iowa Legislative Interim Calendar and Briefing. Official minutes, reports, and other detailed information concerning the committee or topic addressed by a briefing can be obtained from the committee's Internet page listed above, from the Iowa General Assembly's Internet page at <http://www.legis.iowa.gov/index.aspx>, or from the agency connected with the meeting or topic described.*

### IOWA EDUCATION SUMMIT

July 25-26, 2011

**Background.** In his 2011 budget address, Governor Terry Branstad announced he would convene an education summit during summer 2011; pulling the nation's education reform leaders together to assist the state in developing a reform agenda that would be approved during a special session of the General Assembly, which the Governor planned to convene in the fall if consensus on such an agenda was reached. In an interview conducted by the Associated Press on July 5, 2011, the Governor announced that he was dropping plans for a special session in the fall, but would instead campaign to build consensus to enact education reform during the 2012 General Assembly.

**Overview.** The Iowa Education Summit was held at Hy-Vee Hall in Des Moines on Monday and Tuesday, July 25-26, 2011. The event offered general sessions for all attending and on Monday afternoon attendees were offered a number of concurrent session options. Video recordings of the sessions may be accessed on the Internet and from URLs listed at the end of this briefing.

**Opening Remarks.** Governor Branstad gave opening remarks in which he expressed a desire to pursue reform in three key areas: seeking better teachers through higher standards for becoming a teacher, better teacher pay, and other means; more accountability for student learning, including additional student assessments; and more innovation, including further use of charter schools and online learning and a focus on competence over seat time.

**Keynote Presentation.** U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan noted that many nations and states are now outperforming Iowa, which should serve as a wake-up call for the state. He reviewed the findings of the Department of Education's *Rising to Greatness Report* and the results for Iowa's students who take the National Assessment of Educational Progress and opined that Iowa has not done enough to attract, prepare, support, evaluate, and reward top talent in the classroom; and Iowa's high schools are falling short of preparing most students to be career and college-ready. He identified four factors for Iowa's flat educational performance:

- Setting low academic standards that did not prepare students for colleges and careers.
- Failure to lead in implementing innovation to increase learning, such as using time more creatively to provide for longer school days, longer weeks, and longer years for students needing more help.
- Failure to lead nationally in increasing educator effectiveness. He opined that absolutely nothing matters more to the success of children in the classroom than creating a strong talent development system that gets great teachers and principals into the communities, schools, and classrooms where children need them most.
- Failure to lead in creating high-quality early learning programs, which are one of the most foundational and cost-effective investments a state can make in its children.

However, Mr. Duncan stated that the federal government must also perform better, including reform of No Child Left Behind. He discussed how foreign countries such as Finland elevate teachers as a profession more than the United States. In Finland, only the top 10 percent of students are allowed to become teachers, class sizes are smaller, and more money is spent on helping underachievers.

Mr. Duncan cited further hands-on training for new teachers, an increased use of available data regarding teacher education, more technology in the classroom, true alternative certification of teachers, monetary rewards for effective educators who serve in high-need schools and subjects, and replacing Iowa's mediocre teacher evaluation system as other steps which should be pursued. He also stated that both public schools and charter schools have their strengths, and both can be effective. Enhancing education for all is the key to Iowa's future economic prosperity.

**The Case for Systemic School Reform.** Chairman of the James B. Hunt Jr. Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy, James B. Hunt, Jr., discussed steps taken in North Carolina during his time as Governor of that state, including starting a statewide preschool program; statewide education effectiveness standards; enhanced teacher mentoring, with teachers evaluating other teachers in the classroom; setting the focus on improving each school as a whole; and use of national board certification. While Governor, he would regularly meet with a group of teachers to discuss education issues. In children's early years, the focus needs to be on parenting skills, high-quality centers and caregivers, and health issues. He also offered as a suggestion, which he was unsure had yet been implemented in any state, the use of student feedback in all levels of education in a similar manner to how it is currently used in postsecondary education.

**What Supports Effective Teaching.** Stanford University Professor of Education Linda Darling-Hammond began her session by discussing characteristics of education systems in nations with the highest rates of achievement such as Finland and Singapore. The characteristics she cited include sustained investment; stronger social supports, such as more effort to combat poverty; more support for ongoing teacher learning, including greater autonomy; a focus on performance assessments and essays instead of multiple choice tests; equitable allocation of resources across all schools, but greater investments in high need schools and students; equitable access to a rich curriculum; a focus on higher order thinking rather than memorization; a focus on providing students with the resources to learn, rather than merely incentivizing good results; a stronger focus on teacher collaboration; extensive initial teacher preparation at government expense, including providing a salary while training; providing beginners with intensive mentoring; and working to improve less effective teachers rather than ranking and penalizing them.

Ms. Darling-Hammond also discussed measures that have been effective in this country, including national teacher certification; encouraging schoolwide teacher collaboration; and seeking out and supporting better principals who are able to provide effective leadership rather than focusing on administrative tasks, who are able to serve as mentors to teachers, and who are willing to redesign schools to implement effective new education strategies. She also stated that bonus pay has been shown to be ineffective as a strategy when unaccompanied by other reforms.

The typical barriers to education reform identified include clinging to tradition, inability to persuade stakeholders of the merits of reform proposals, and lack of persistence in pursuing reforms, which can take a decade or more to be truly effective.

Ms. Darling-Hammond received a question on what measures might be pursued that would have an impact in the short term. She cited investment in improved compensation schemes; implementing career ladders that enable leadership roles for accomplished teachers; raising standards for entry into the field of education; equalizing funding across districts; higher evaluation standards and greater enforcement of them; more opportunities for collaboration and professional development, especially in the area of working with more challenged students; and increased use of clinical training for new teachers. She also advised greater focus on preparation for instructional leadership and organizational improvement.

**2011: The Year of Education Reform in New Jersey.** New Jersey Governor Chris Christie spoke on developments in education in his state. He discussed education funding in New Jersey, and described how despite all the money spent on education in his state, there have been few positive results to show for it. He stated that there are many examples of positive education reform that can be considered, but none of them are perfect. He discussed what he called common sense reforms that should be pursued, including limitation of teacher tenure, some additional student testing, and use of teacher incentives. He argued that some competition in the field of education would be effective, as it is in the private sector. He also stated that charter schools can be effective in some circumstances, and offered his support for school choice.

**STEM Council Announcement.** Iowa's Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds gave opening remarks for the second day of the summit, during which she announced the creation of the Governor's Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Advisory Council. Greater knowledge in the key skills for students in the 21st century will make Iowa's young people more competitive in the global marketplace. The goals of the advisory council should include significantly raising student achievement in STEM, better preparing math and science teachers, and mapping STEM education to economic development to foster more innovation in research and entrepreneurship. The advisory council will work with schools, community colleges, public and private universities, parents, community organizations, and business and industry to further STEM-based education projects in Iowa. Ms. Reynolds' written remarks: <https://governor.iowa.gov/2011/07/lt-gov-reynolds-announces-statewide-stem-advisory-council-at-iowa-education-summit/>

**How Massachusetts Became the Top Education State, and Next Steps for the U.S. to be Globally Competitive.** National Assessment Governing Board Chair and former Massachusetts Education Commissioner David Driscoll spoke about the education reforms undertaken in his state, and how the U.S. can become globally competitive in education.

Massachusetts' Education Reform Act of 1993 sought to give schools the tools they needed while also imposing more accountability. The law set higher standards and expectations for students, teachers, and school districts. More subject matter testing was required, but all of the testing materials were approved by teachers. He emphasized the difference between testing that is standardized versus testing that is standard-based, which is what Massachusetts has pursued. He admitted that his state had much more funding available to pursue education reform than most states have today. He stated that states will likely have to learn to live with funding limitations as they pursue education reform going forward. He noted that Massachusetts had made use of charter schools, but with significant accountability, which had resulted in some charter schools being shut down.

#### **Panels.**

- ***Great Teachers and Principals: Improving Educator Effectiveness.*** Panelists Mr. James G. Cibulka, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education President; Ms. Linda Darling-Hammond, Stanford Professor of Education; Mr. Mike Johnston, Colorado State Senator; Mr. Steve Tozer, University of Illinois Professor of Education; and Ms. Kate Walsh, National Council on Teacher Quality President, discussed ways of spreading effective teaching practices; the mythology that persons who enter practitioner preparation have lower academic scores than the average, when the scores on average are actually in the top quarter - though there is wide variability across the nation in entrance standards; the need to raise practitioner, accreditation, and core standards; managing leadership challenges, how leadership changes can dramatically improve teaching, and restructuring the pathway into leadership, possibly at government expense; recognizing that increasing classroom diversity requires a different way of preparing teachers, especially preparing teachers who are going to low-performing, high-need schools; the inadvisability of forced teacher placement; the huge variabilities in rates of effectiveness for alternative and traditional teacher education routes; tenure standards; assisting and removing ineffective educators, in one instance through a peer assistance and review program that was bargained, did not include grievance procedures, and involved both administrators and teachers; a greater focus on holistically improving schools as institutions rather than on improving individual teachers; pay-for-performance as a means of encouraging good practice dissemination; linking teacher and administrator evaluations to student growth; more effective use of teacher time outside the classroom, including further opportunities for professional development; the need to restructure teacher time for joint-planning, mentoring, observation, and lesson-study; the implementation of tests to determine whether teachers at all levels are competent to teach reading and mathematics; and the efficacy of removing ineffective teachers as a means of education reform.
- ***Right Direction on Standards, Assessments, and the Achievement Gap.*** A panel comprised of Mr. Driscoll; Mr. Todd Hellman, Battelle for Kids Managing Director of Strategic Measures; Mr. Matthew Ladner, Foundation for Excellence in Education Senior Advisor; Mr. Gene Wilhoit, Council of Chief State School Officers Executive Director; Ms. Nadga Young, SAS Institute Education Specialist; and Mr. Jason Williams, Stand for Children Massachusetts Executive Director, discussed the common core, which has been adopted by over 40 states (including Iowa), is internationally benchmarked, and places a new focus on cognitive application by students; the common core assessments that are currently under development by two consortia; states that have had success in reducing achievement gaps through creating transparency through the testing system, parental choice, and incentivized success, including cash to schools through the funding formula for students who pass advanced placement examinations; grading school buildings; the fundamental knowledge base every student needs no matter whether a student chooses to pursue college or vocational education; using value-added assessments to place teachers with students who respond best to the teacher's methods; and the appropriate emphasis on assessments and transparency in testing.

**Concurrent Sessions.** Two hour-long breakout panels were then offered, with a choice of eight topics for each hour:

1. Attracting More Top Talent and Better Preparing New Teachers
2. Setting the Bar Higher for Teacher Evaluation and Compensation
3. Beyond Building Management: Principals as Instructional Leaders
4. What the World's Best-Performing School Systems Have in Common
5. Making Schools Fit Kids Instead of Kids Fit Schools
6. Education in a Digital World
7. The Value of a Globally Prepared Workforce
8. How States Can Put Meaningful Reform in Place

**Closing Remarks.** Governor Branstad, in his closing remarks, stated that he and Lieutenant Governor Reynolds will consider the ideas heard during this and other events conducted during July, will continue to listen to the education stakeholders' suggestions, and will try to reach the broadest possible consensus. He added that his office will work to produce draft recommendations for reform this fall, and would seek Iowans' feedback on that draft before issuing final recommendations for the 2012 Iowa General Assembly's consideration.

**Roundtable Sessions Held Prior to Summit.** In advance of the Iowa Education Summit, on Wednesday, July 13, three hour-long roundtable discussions were held by Governor Branstad and Lieutenant Governor Reynolds. The discussions with selected business leaders, college and university presidents and K-20 educators, and teachers were live-streamed and videos are posted at: <https://governor.iowa.gov/2011/07/video-gov-branstad-lt-gov-reynolds-education-summit-roundtable-discussions/>

**Summit/Roundtable Videos/Documents Posted Online.**

Iowa Education Summit Videos: <https://educateiowa.eduvision.tv/default.aspx>

Rising to Greatness: An Imperative for Improving Iowa's Schools:

[http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2333](http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2333)

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